A U M

Be sure to study the great diversity of human nature.—KANT

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THE DIFFICULT SIMPLICITY

THOSE who remember Robert Crosbie say that he was wholly unabashed by occasional visitors to meetings at which he spoke who regarded him as "too simple" in his exposition of Theosophy, and who sought a "more advanced" version of the teachings. Readers of *The Friendly Philosopher* have learned to appreciate Mr. Crosbie's simplicity, and to understand his purpose to lay the foundations of a working body of students who would maintain the spirit of the Theosophical Movement through the long middle years of the twentieth century, and thereafter.

That Mr. Crosbie built well, there can be no doubt. Yet it is best to admit that his simplicity was a far from simple attainment. In this he was like Mr. Judge, whose writings have an unforbidding quality of almost homely address, enabling the reader to start out as a student without undue apprehensions. But both Mr. Crosbie and Mr. Judge practiced a simplicity which had come full circle—it was rooted, that is, in philosophical profundity, and thus avoided any semblance of shallow expression. This sort of simplicity is an evolution, and it cannot be imitated, however much it may be admired. It must rather be achieved.

Mr. Crosbie's name is seldom mentioned in these pages. Verbal demonstrations in his behalf would not have been to his liking, nor would they serve a useful purpose. It is more to the point to acknowledge, occasionally, in the pages of the magazine he founded, that his identity is inseparable from the work he began, and that except for him it would not exist at all. He would want no monuments, but

might find exceeding pleasure in the unpretentious pursuit, through the years, of what he set out to do.

The mark of the wise man is a ready calm in the facing of perplexities, and the ability to touch the core of a question without obscuring the fragile paradoxes in which truth is always embodied. There is always the sense of wisdom-at-the-moment in what a wise man says—a kind of pertinence which needs no bookish support; although the learning found in books is abundantly present, it operates as a distillation instead of a "quotation." The wise man does not search anxiously for texts. If he has a need for texts, he will find them. Instead of relying on texts, the wise man has a knowing kinship with human hearts. It is to these that he speaks, from the tempered conjunction of his own mind and heart, and it is out of this conjunction that arises his simplicity.

And yet, lest the mechanisms of a wise man's wisdom be overlooked, it is well to remember that Mr. Crosbie was a great student of the books of H.P.B. and Mr. Judge. It is no exaggeration to say that in his case, as in some others, one who seemed to need the books least knew them best.

He might have said, perhaps, that H.P.B. wrote the books in order that Theosophists might study them. To fall short here is like falling short in any other important obligation. Not to study will make our "simplicity" a shallow thing, more like an echo than a discovery of truth. The devotee of Robert Crosbie is also a devotee of H. P. Blavatsky, or suffers the weakness of an imitator, a "follower," who would make up in piety what he lacks in strength of mind.

Each one, then, has need of finding his own way to simplicity, and to a simplicity that is truly his own. It was Mr. Crosbie's resolve to make his life into an invitation to the Teachers of Theosophy. Those who speak highly of him, yet neglect the invitation, failing to wrestle with the complexities of the over-arching body of teachings in which he found both life and work, can hardly count themselves faithful to his purposes. His very patience and uncomplaining encouragement to every sort of effort are a kind of "secret doctrine" in respect to what he hoped of others coming after—that they would do, in their way, what he had done.

Here was a man incapable of sour speech, of "clever" rejoinder, who took no pleasure in the arts of controversy and who had long ago put

away the childishness of recrimination. In a Theosophic world bewildered by the tensions of rivalry and the pretensions of leadership, he began the slow, constructive work of Theosophic education. He had no time for anything else, nor have we, could we but see it.

He left us an example of what a man can make of the Theosophical teachings. But he, comes the discouraging whisper, was "unique." If he was unique, or if people come to believe this of him, then he was a failure in all he set out to do. For the deepest intention of every true Theosophist is to form and foster the conviction that every man has within him the capacities, however latent or undeveloped, of the highest, and that the proper work of each one is to seek that growth which, in his own hour and time, is natural and fitting for him. For this growth of students, taken collectively, is all the progress that is possible for the Theosophical Movement, now or at any other time of history.

This is the lesson of Mr. Crosbie's life; well learned, it could mean the end of all sectarianism in Theosophy, and in Theosophists. It could mean, as well, the power of a simplicity that comes from inner understanding, a strength obtained from the same source that Mr. Crosbie discovered, and sought to show to others.

Spiritual Perception

There are all degrees of proficiency in knowledge of the world. It is sufficient, to our present purpose, to indicate three. One class live to the utility of the symbol; esteeming health and wealth a final good. Another class live above this mark to the beauty of the symbol; as the poet, and artist, and the naturalist, and man of science. A third class live above the beauty of the symbol to the beauty of the thing signified; these are wise men. The first class have common sense; the second, taste; and the third, spiritual perception. Once in a long time, a man traverses the whole scale, and sees and enjoys the symbol solidly; then also has a clear eye for its beauty; and lastly, whilst he nitches his tent on this sacred volcanic isle of nature, does not offer to build houses and barns thereon, reverencing the splendor of the God which he sees bursting through each chink and cranny.

—Emerson

THE MORAL LAW OF COMPENSATION

By An Ex-Asiatic*

"For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field; and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee." Job, Chap. V, v. 23, Christian Bible.

AS a Western Theosophist I would like to present to my Indian brethren a few thoughts upon what I conceive to be the operation of the Law of Compensation in part, or, to put it more clearly, upon the operation of one branch of this law.

It seems undeniable that this law is the most powerful, and the one having the most numerous and complicated ramifications of all the laws with which we have to deal. This it is that makes so difficult for a human spirit the upward progress after which we all are striving, and it is often forced upon me that it is this law which perpetuates the world, with its delusions, its sadness, its illusions, and that if we could but understand it so as to avoid its operation, the *nirvana* for the whole human family would be an accomplished fact.

In a former number a respected brother from Ceylon, speaking with authority, showed us how to answer the question so often asked: "Why do we see a good man eating the bread of poverty, and the wicked dwelling in riches, and why so often is a good man cast down from prosperity to despair, and a wicked man after a period of sorrow and hardship made to experience for the balance of his life nothing but success and prosperity?" He replied that our acts in any one period of existence were like the arrow shot from the bow, acting upon us in the next life and producing our rewards and punishments. So that to accept his explanation—as we must—it is, of course, necessary to believe in re-incarnation. As far as he went, he was very satisfactory, but he did not go into the subject as thoroughly as his great knowledge would permit. It is to be hoped that he will favor us with further essays upon the same subject.

I have not yet seen anywhere stated the *rationale* of the operation of this law—how and why it acts in any particular case.

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* W. Q. Judge, F. T. S. [Note.—This early article by Mr. Judge, published five years before he founded the *Path,* appeared originally in *The Theosophist,* Oct., 1881, and was last reprinted in Theosophy, March, 1943.]

To say that the reviling of a righteous man will condemn one to a life of a beggar in the next existence is definite enough in statement, but it is put forward without a reason, and unless we accept these teachings blindly we cannot believe such consequences would follow. To appeal to our minds, there should be a reason given, which shall be at once plain and reasonable. There must be some law for this particular case; otherwise, the statement cannot be true. There must occur, from the force of the revilement, the infraction of some natural regulation, the production of some discord in the spiritual world which has for a consequence the punishment by beggary in the succeedent existence of the reviler. The only other reason possible of statement is, that it is so ordered. But such a reason is not a reason at all because no Theosophist will believe that any punishment, save that which man himself inflicts, is *ordered.* As this world is a world produced by law, moved by law, and governed by the natural operation of laws which need no one to operate them, but which invariably and unerringly operate themselves, it must follow that any punishment suffered in this way is not suffered through any order, but is suffered because the natural law operates itself. And further, we are compelled to accept this view, because to believe that it was *ordered,* would infer the existence of some particular person, mind, will, or intelligence to *order* it, which for one instant no one will believe, who knows that this world was produced, and is governed, by the operation of number, weight and measure, with harmony over and above all.

So then we should know in what manner the law operates, which condemns the reviler of a righteous man to beggary in his next existence. That knowledge once gained, we may be able to find for ourselves the manner and power of placating as it were this terrible monster of compensation by performing some particular acts which shall in some way be a restoration of the harmony which we have broken, if perchance we have unconsciously or inadvertently committed the sin.

Let us now imagine a boy born of wealthy parents, but not given proper intelligence. He is, in fact, called an idiot. But instead of being a mild idiot, he possesses great malice which manifests itself in his tormenting insects and animals at every opportunity. He lives to be, say, nineteen and has spent his years in the malicious, although idiotic, torment of unintelligent, defenceless animal life. He has thus hindered many a spirit in its upward march and has beyond doubt inflicted pain and caused a moral discord. This fact of his idiocy is not a restoration

of the discord. Every animal that he tortured had its own particular elemental spirit, and so had every flower that he broke in pieces. What did they know of his idiocy, and what did they feel after the torture but revenge. And had they a knowledge of his idiocy, being unreasoning beings, they could not see in it any excuse for his acts. He dies at nineteen, and after the lapse of years is reborn in another nation—perchance another age—into a body possessing more than average intelligence. He is no longer an idiot, but a sensible active man who now has a chance to regenerate the spirit given to every man, without the chains of idiocy about it. What is to be the result of the evil deeds of his previous existence? Are they to go unpunished? I think not. But how are they to be punished; and if the compensation comes, in what manner does the law operate upon him? To me there seems to be but one way, that is through the discord produced in the spirits of those unthinking beings which he had tortured during those nineteen years. But how? In this way. In the agony of their torture these beings turned their eyes upon their torturer, and dying, his spiritual picture through the excess of their pain, together with that pain and the desire for revenge, were photographed, so to speak, upon their spirits—for in no other way could they have a memory of him—and when he became a disembodied spirit they clung to him until he was reincarnated when they were still with him like barnacles on a ship. They can now only see through his eyes, and their revenge consists in precipitating themselves down his glance on any matter he may engage in, thus attaching themselves to it for the purpose of dragging it down to disaster.

This leads to the query of what is meant by these elementals precipitating themselves down his glance. The ancients taught that the astral light—*Akasa*—is projected from the eyes, the thumbs and the palms of the hands. Now as the elementals exist in the astral light, they will be able to see only through those avenues of human organism which are used by the astral light in travelling from the person. The eyes are the most convenient. So when this person directs his glance on any thing or person, the astral light goes out in that glance and through it those elementals see that which he looks upon. And so also, if he should magnetise a person, the elementals will project themselves from his hands and eyes upon the subject magnetised and do it injury.

Well then, our re-incarnated idiot engages in a business which requires his constant surveillance. The elementals go with him and

throwing themselves upon everything he directs, cause him continual disaster.

But one by one they are caught up again out of the orbit of necessity into the orbit of probation in this world, and at last all are gone, whereupon he finds success in all he does and has his chance again to reap eternal life. He finds the realization of the words of Job quoted at the head of this article: he is in "league with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field are at peace with him." These words were penned ages ago by those ancient Egyptians who knew all things. Having walked in the secret paths of wisdom, which no fowl knoweth and the vulture's eye hath not seen, they discovered those hidden laws, one within the other like the wheels of Ezekiel, which govern the universe. There is no other reasonable explanation of the passage quoted than the theory faintly outlined in the foregoing poor illustration. And I only offer it as a possible solution or answer to the question as to what is the *rationale* of the operation of the Moral Law of Compensation in that particular case, of which I go so far as to say that I think I know a living illustration. But it will not furnish an answer for the case of the punishment for reviling a righteous man.

I would earnestly ask the learned friends of the Editor of the THEOSOPHIST to give the explanation, and also hint to us how in this existence we may act so as to mitigate the horrors of our punishment and come as near as may be to a league with the stones and the beasts of the field.

NO VISIBLE SCHEME

External nature knows joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, light and darkness, life and death, but of duty it knows nothing, and it can never teach it to man. And, strange to say, whilst conscience thus claims a supremacy over our other faculties or powers of mind, and claims to give law to them all, it relies for obedience on no visible scheme of rewards or penalties as the sanction to enforce its decrees. It is true that the moral order of the world sometimes seems to stand in accord with the dictates of conscience, and sometimes the sense of sin is accompanied by the sense of terrors to come. But the voice of conscience does not depend for its claim to obedience on these sanctions: it has spoken clearly and unmistakably in ages and to men who entertained no such beliefs, and felt no such terrors.

—SIR EDWARD FRY

A CONVERSATION ON MAHATMAS

BETWEEN SMITH, AN INQUIRER, AND JONES, AN F.T.S.

SMITH.—I have been dipping a little into Theosophy lately and have become quite interested. Some persons of ability seem to be taking part in the movement, and I like many things that they say, but many others seem to me to be fanciful, either unproved, or in their very nature wholly unsusceptible of proof.

Jones.—To what points do you especially refer?

S.—Well, for instance, I have read and heard a good deal about Mahatmas; the authority of these real or imaginary beings seems to count for a great deal, but I have yet to come across any real proof of their existence.

J.—What kind of proof do you want?

S.—Any proof. I should like to see one. That would be the best kind of proof.

J.—Why would it? What would he look like?

S.—Like a Mahatma, of course.

J.—What does a Mahatma look like?

S.—How should I know, never having seen one? If I had, of course I would be less skeptical.

J.—Very logical: but I am really trying to put myself in your frame of mind so as to understand you, so I will change the form of my question. What have you decided a real Mahatma should look like, if merely seeing one is to be proof to you of the existence of such a being?

S.—[After a little thought.] I see what you are driving at. I was speaking off-hand when I said that seeing a Mahatma would prove that he was one. I should not expect to see a monster; he would have to look like any other man of course, except that his face might show some evidence of nobility and power. That alone I know would not prove anything, but what was really in my mind was the exhibition of some powers transcending those of common men.

J.—What would you expect him to do?

S.—I don't know exactly; some miraculous thing such as floating in the air, making gold, dematerializing something, himself for instance,

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NOTE.—This article was first printed by Wm. Q. Judge in the *Path* for October, 1892, and was reprinted in THEOSOPHY for October, 1915.

and again reäppearing, doing all this, of course, under test conditions so that I could be sure that there was no fraud.

J.—What would be the use of his taking so much trouble?

S.—To prove to me and through me to others that he was a Mahatma, and that consequently if there was one there might be more of them.

J.—Would these performances prove that he was a Mahatma?

S.—It seems to me that they would.

J.—What is your idea of a Mahatma?

S.—I am told that the word means "great soul." If so, it should refer to one who has overcome all animal and selfish passions and ambitions, whose knowledge and wisdom extend far into the unseen world, and who is therefore able to give tangible proof of this wisdom.

J.—I will not criticize your definition; but the proof you demand, apparently considered by you so exacting, would seem to me wholly inadequate. I should be more skeptical, and you, on the other hand, would be more credulous than I take you to be, if the production of these phenomena, genuine and remarkable as they might be, would be sufficient to convince you of the wisdom and purity of the producer.

S.—Perhaps I may still be a little off; but what are you driving at?

J.—If you lived in India, a half-naked juggler might come into your court yard, and on your own ground, surrounded by your own friends and servants and in broad daylight, produce phenomena as remarkable as anything you have named. You might see the floating of heavy bodies in the air, the production and disappearance of solid objects, even of living persons, without any possibility of stage machinery, the visible growth of plants, even of trees reaching a height of fifty feet or more, solid and tangible, yet vanishing into thin air at the close of the performance. These and many similar things are exibited by these strolling performers, who receive your coins with a thankful salaam and depart like an organ-grinder to repeat the performance elsewhere. Would you call these men "great souls"? Mr. Crookes, the eminent English scientist, made many experiments in the phenomena of so-called materialization, and was nearly turned out of the Royal Society for saying that he believed in occult forces, although specially organized committees of experts were unable even to suggest an explanation. Would you say that the ignorant school-girl through whom many of these phenomena were produced was a "great soul"? Mr. Home, the celebrated medium, has floated in the air scores of times, in many

places, and in presence of many competent and critical witnesses. Other phenomena, if possible still more extraordinary, have been produced either by or through him under the most exacting test conditions, yet his life was one long exhibition of petty jealousy and ill-temper, and not a sentence of his has left the world wiser or better. Would you call him a "great soul"?

S.—Hold on there. I will come down of my own accord, like the coon, so you need not load again. I see that phenomena alone are insufficient, although I confess I had not fully realized it before, but still I think you will admit that the Mahatmas need not make themselves so scarce. They might show *some* phenomena, just enough to attract and interest people, and then having arrested attention might proceed to explain the phenomena and give some of their higher wisdom to the world.

J.—What would you have them say?

S.—Jones, seeing that it is you I do not mind telling you that you have a most exasperating and disagreeable way of asking questions when I am trying to get some solid information, or at least some points from you, yet I don't suppose you intend it in that way.

J.—I certainly do not, and am glad you do not really misunderstand me. Even a single question will often clear up an issue amazingly, so with your leave please consider my question repeated.

S.—Of course I don't know what they would say, for if I did it would be because I knew these things myself: you must see that. But I should expect them to tell us things that were wise and true, susceptible of verification and tending to the elevation of mankind.

J.—How would you know that they were wise and true?

S.—Why, because some things we might know to be true, and others we would feel *must* be true, and others again if they seemed strange and incredible ought to be capable of verification.

J.—Very good. Now let me analyze your answer. It involves no wisdom to tell us things that we already know to be true; this alone would be mere repetition and platitude, although a starting point from the well-known is necessary. Other truths which are new we feel to be true because the elements of this new experience are already in our minds, although not brought to the surface or combined before. New truths are truths relatively only to a certain number of persons, those who are ready to receive them. The simplest geometrical demonstration would sound like nonsense to a savage; a lecture on calculus would

be unintelligible to a class of school-boys. This would be because the elementary conceptions of abstract form and of indiscreet and simultaneously varying qualities exist in but a rudimentary stage in undeveloped minds. An Adept's power of explaining consciousness and modes of existence on other planes would be limited by the capacity of the listeners and could compel the attention of but very few. You say also that statements seeming strange and incredible ought to be capable of verification. That of course is true, broadly speaking, but wholly untrue if coupled with the tacit assumption that the verification must of necessity be an easy thing, convenient to the idly curious. We may listen to a lecture from an astronomer, but to verify his statements would require a telescope like his own, to say nothing of the skill to use it and the mathematical knowledge involving long years of patient study. If there are Adepts, their powers are the results of lives of constant effort, carried on under the most favorable circumstances. How many are there who will even enter upon the rough and rugged road that leads to adeptship, and even of these few how many will follow it for any great distance?

S.—I appreciate the force of your remarks, but still it appears to me that the Adepts or Mahatmas, without going wholly into incomprehensible profundities, could give to the world some of their wisdom in a form that would be partly understood by the more intelligent or intuitional, could at least indicate the lines of research that would lead most directly to new discoveries. They might smooth the path that leads to higher knowledge and better life, hard enough for common humanity, even if it be less rugged and dangerous than that which leads more directly to adeptship. They might tell us something of the past of our own race and this globe, and of its probable future; something of the unseen world and its forces, even if language could not be found to make it all very plain.

J.—Suppose that they did so and that people were not interested enough to read or to listen.

S.—You are making a very foolish supposition. I do not overrate the numbers of the really thinking portion of the community, for I know them to be relatively small, but still if such knowledge was put in book form the printers would hardly be able to work fast enough.

J.—Are you quite sure of that? I will venture to say that it would be a long time before it would be read by any considerable proportion

of the members of the Theosophical Society, still longer before the majority would really study it.

S.—You astonish me. You seem to place a very low estimate upon the intelligence of your fellow members. I should have rated them more highly, although I am not a member of the Society.

J.—I do not underrate them. On the contrary, I consider them a body of men and women of more than average intelligence; but I do rate the proportion of really independent opinion in any community at a very low figure. People are not so hungry for the higher knowledge as they think they are.

S.—I do not agree with you, and should like to see the matter put to the test.

J.—It has been put to the test. The knowledge you are so eager for has been published in book form.

S.—When, where? Is it in English or any language I can learn?

J.—You will not have to study Sanskrit. You know all about the book and have looked into it. It is called the *Secret Doctrine.*

S.—What, that book! Why yes, I have seen it and looked into it a little bit here and there, but then you know there is so much of it, and it seemed rather dry, and you have no idea how busy I have been.

J.—I don't suppose I have.

S.—Besides, I thought Madame Blavatsky wrote that book.

J.—Suppose she did; some human fingers had to be employed, whether those of an Adept or an Agent. She drew almost wholly upon the wisdom of the Masters, unless she lies. That book goes straight to the center of every great question in science, religion, and metaphysics, with a boldness of statement and clearness of thought for which there is no parallel in the history of literature. Setting aside its philosophy and history drawn from occult records, no single writer ever equalled its wealth of learning, illustration, and quotation; drawn from the most varied and often recondite sources, from history, theology, and comparative mythology, from science in all its branches and from the philosophical writings of all ages. It is well known and can be amply proved, that this great work was written rapidly and without library or references; yet its quotations and statements are accurate and there is food for profound thought on every page. H. P. Blavatsky was a woman of remarkable intellect, it is true, but neither scholarly nor systematic. During her life of travel and adventure she had no opportunity of evolving this wonderful philosophy or accumulating this

enormous mass of literary and philosophical learning, nor did she ever make any pretense of having done so. In my judgment she could no more have composed that work from her own resources than she could have built the pyramids of Egypt. If after reading it with more attention you still find no evidence of existence of more highly evolved men, call them what you will, further search would be a waste of time.

You must excuse me, Smith, for I have an appointment elsewhere and am overdue.

Come and see me if you think I can help you at any time.

S.—[Soliloquizing.] Now that is the way with these Theosophical people. I have an independent mind and have attended several of their meetings and asked a good many questions with a view of finding things out for myself without so much studying. They seem to answer you, but have an annoying way of throwing a man back upon himself that I don't like.

I wish I knew whether there are any Mahatmas, without reading all of that big book.

I don't much believe there are, perhaps shouldn't know when I got through. [Exit Smith with a puzzled and somewhat disgruntled air.]

WILLIAM MAIN

A DOCTRINE TO INSPIRE

The Brahmanic religion is a philosophy; and it keeps an incomparably strong hold on the minds of its devotees. Its most vital and comprehensive principle is expressed in the following sentence: "The soul itself is not susceptible of pain, or decay, or death; the site of these things is nature; but nature is unconscious; the consciousness that pain exists is restricted to the soul, although the soul is not the actual seat of pain." This is the reason why every Hindu yearns so deeply to be freed from the meshes of nature, why he so anxiously follows the light of faith and penance, or the clew of speculation, through all mazes of mystery. It is that he may at last gaze on the central TRUTH, and through that sight seize the fruition of the supreme and eternal good of man in the unity of his selfhood with the Infinite.

—WILLIAM R. ALGER

NOTES ON THE DHAMMAPADA

THE seventh Canto of *The Dhammapada,* entitled "The Sage," at first glance seems to be merely a continuation of the themes developed in the previous chapter—"The Wise Man." However, as one compares the major emphases in both Cantos it would seem that, in speaking of "the sage," Buddha gives particular attention to the state of mind of one who retires into solitude for contemplation. The "wise man," while "living in this world yet attains the bliss of Nirvana," and it is the intent here to affirm that one *may* follow the ordinary pursuits of man and still be "wise"—untroubled, persevering, unattached to those things which hold the personal nature in bondage.

The Wise Man who becomes a Sage identifies himself with the "life of the gods," for he has "completed his journey" in the mundane world for this particular round of existence. But he is compassionate; he can be reached by those who seek him, even though he no longer himself needs to seek a focus for work in the world. It is in this sense that, for him, "there is no round of births and deaths," for, seeking nothing, he undergoes no disappointment nor is he attached, even in the purest and noblest way, to any success. By learning to rise above *psychological* death and birth, he has transcended literal death also, his consciousness has become an unbroken stream. Again, though, he is not remote from men who aspire to reach a similar high state of consciousness, but only remote from the travails that becloud their perception. This is why he must be *sought,* and no longer dwells in the abodes of men. But his presence is sensed, at times, even by lowly members of the multitude, and even dim awareness of his presence stands as witness to the fact that it is possible for any manasic being to "throw off the fetters and free himself in all ways."

In discussing the qualities of the sage, Buddha recapitulates a description of the necessary disciplines which are finally brought to perfection in the Adept. The keys, as intimated in earlier Cantos, are "vigilance," "exertion," "thoughtfulness," and "awareness." It cannot be stressed too often that Buddhism never preaches the blessings of a passive existence. Awareness requires contemplation, and contemplation necessitates discipline and self-control. A recent speech by Burma's Prime Minister, the Honorable U Nu, explains the logic of the rigorous Buddhist quest in answering the question, "What is Buddhism?" "Bud-

dhist Doctrine," affirmed this distinguished statesman, "involves an exercise of a rigid personal discipline, so as to attain a serenity of mind." He continues:

> The Buddha has clearly said that there is but one way which will lead to freedom from suffering. This way is no other than the way of complete awareness. The nature of this awareness will be understood better if one practices contemplation.
>
> As we are letting in a free flow of sensations through our sense organs, mental states of either attachment or revulsion are occurring in us every day, every hour, every minute and every second. So long as we allow ourselves to be victims of these states of mind, we will have an incorrect perception of ourselves and of things around us, both animate and inanimate objects.
>
> What is therefore required, is the sense of awareness about the first impact of sight, sound, scent, taste, touch and thought. If you open the door, all visitors waiting outside the door will enter the room. But if you close the door after the entry of the first person the rest of the visitors will be kept outside. In the same way, if you apply a sense of awareness every time you see or hear or eat or smell or touch or think, mental states of attachment or revulsion will not occur in you so long as that awareness lasts. An angry man, at the instant application of "awareness" of his anger, will find that his anger subsides. I believe many of you must have had such an experience of "awareness" at one time or another, but I think there are only a very few people who have attempted to strengthen this ability to be "aware."
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> This awareness of mind can be strengthened if it is continuously applied in the correct manner on all occasions. It will certainly be difficult at first, but a constant application of this awareness of mind to all your senses will preclude the possibility of the encroachment of attachment or revulsion. After a sufficient practice, awareness will become firm and constant.

Turning back to the text of Canto 7 we find a description of the transition stage between the "wise man" and "sage":

> Those who have no possessions, who nourish themselves according to knowledge and who realize the goal of freedom by perceiving that life is empty and transient, their path is hard to trace like the flight of birds through the sky.

In the next verse, Buddha repeats the description of the man destined to become a sage by saying that when he has "perceived the goal of freedom, his path is hard to trace like the flight of birds through the sky." These are suggestive words. The man of vision, the man of greatness, indeed treads a path as "hard to trace" as "the flight of birds

through the sky." This, for the reason that the Sage does not measure growth of soul in terms of a logical progression of tangible accomplishments. Those who do, have, at it were, cut a groove for themselves through life's experiences, and thus may appear to move along an unbroken chain of triumphs. But the wise man on the way to seership is not trying to get any*where* or acquire any*thing*. According to *our* "measurements," some of his expenditures of energy may seem aimless, illogical, or wasteful of time; but his is an inner quest, and his development not to be measured by ordinary standards. When *he* "succeeds," that sort of achievement will seldom be understood by the multitudes. So, perhaps, with such outstanding characters as Thomas Paine, Lincoln, Gandhi, and Einstein. The most important phase of the lives of each of these was entirely unattached to recognizable signs of ambition, a constant acting upon principles supplementing the usual determination to "succeed," either personally or politically.

Verses 9 and 10 again reaffirm Buddha's explanation that the world of the sage need not be considered as one bereft of all enjoyment:

> Delightful is the place where Arhats dwell, be it a village or a forest, be it by deep waters or by desert-edge.
>
> Delightful are the forests to the Arhat; they charm not the worldly. There the passionless find delight, . . .

The worldly never thoroughly enjoy the magic and grandeur of nature—the "forests" charm them not. But the Arhat knows the full delight of the natural world whether he lives by "deep waters, by desert-edge, or in the forest." Here, again, one notes the Buddha helps us to see the sage as a man whose standards of appreciation are not so much *different* from ours as simply *extended*. All of us, for instance, find "delight" in nature experience to some extent, yet are not sufficiently self-reliant to make the appreciation continuous. But because we know a *little* of that feeling which enables a man to lift himself above his troubles in the presence of the purity and warmth of the nature-world, we are enabled to feel at least some kinship to a sage who lives in the forest not simply to be "alone," but to experience an untrammeled communion with the oneness of all life.

Edwin Burtt's *The Teachings of The Compassionate Buddha* contains some passages which illustrate the sort of "nature-appreciation" which has persisted through the centuries in devotional Buddhism, especially in China and Japan. Here the Bodhisattva is portrayed as a being of "loving compassion"—part of which is expressed in his de-

sire that all men may come some time to live in the "pure land." The pure land, in the Buddhist text quoted by Professor Burtt, is "fertile, delightful, rich in a great variety of flowers and fruits and emitting many fragrant odours." The text continues:

> And many kinds of rivers flow along in this world system Sukhavati. There are great rivers there, one mile broad, and up to fifty miles broad and twelve miles deep. And all these rivers flow along calmly; their water is fragrant with manifold agreeable odours; in them there are bunches of flowers to which various jewels adhere, and they resound with various sweet sounds. And the sound which issues from these great rivers is as pleasant as that of a musical instrument, which consists of hundreds of thousands of kotis of parts, and which, skilfully played, emits a heavenly music. It is deep, commanding, distinct, clear, pleasant to the ear, touching the heart, delightful, sweet, pleasant, and one never tires of hearing it; it always agrees with one and one likes to hear it. Such is the sound that reaches the ears of those beings. Those rivers flow along, full of water scented with the finest odours, and covered with beautiful flowers, resounding with the sounds of many birds, easy to ford, free from mud, and with golden sand at the bottom. And all the wishes beings may think of, they all will be fulfilled, as long as they are rightful.

The consideration of such a text as the foregoing, and after remarking all the "delight" spoken of by Buddha as he describes the dwelling place of the Arhat, leads us to understand why Buddhist teaching has never "left the multitude behind." Here are symbols of the sort of happiness that may be won—the sort of happiness which exacts no price in terms of the misery of others, a happiness as pure as the mind of the Arhat, yet as refreshing as the water of a mountain stream.

The Bodhisattva does not abandon life. Turning his regard from the inner sphere of thought-transcending truth outward again to the phenomenal world, he perceives without the same ocean of being that he found within. Having surpassed the delusions of his formerly self-assertive, self-defensive, self-concerned ego, he knows without and within the same repose. And he is filled with compassion for the self-terrorized beings who live in fright of their own nightmare. He rises, returns to them, and dwells with them as an egoless center.

—JOSEPH CAMPBELL

YOUTH-COMPANIONS ASK—AND ANSWER

IN The Key to Theosophy *H.P.B. states: "Theosophy, in its abstract meaning, is Divine Wisdom, or the aggregate of the knowledge and wisdom that underlie the Universe—the homogeneity of eternal Good." What kind of definition of "good" does this imply, and in what ways is H.P.B.'s definition likely to be at variance with other definitions?*

(*a*) In *Isis Unveiled,* H.P.B. says: "The love of truth is inherently the love of good." This certainly implies that the truth is good, and since Theosophy is the truth, it is the knowledge of the ETERNAL GOOD. But what is this eternal Good? It couldn't be meant in terms of ordinary "good or bad," for the basis of everything that exists cannot have any attribute, as all the attributes are within IT. Also the fact that H.P.B. says *eternal* Good proves that she does not mean to state the quality of human action, because human action is always involved with both "good" and "bad."

It looks as if we should look for a more esoteric meaning. Actually, it is impossible to describe this "something" that we at some moments can sort of feel within us, except that all true aspiration is of the highest and leads to benefit. This could be the reason why H.P.B. uses the word "good."

At first when one reads these statements in an almost technical manner, right away we think of some principle that this should represent. Then the first fundamental principle of Theosophy comes to mind, where H.P.B. especially points out that IT is beyond description, and no attribute can be given to IT.

H.P.B. does not always want us to take her "verbally," but rather asks the student to think in his own way. As soon as we want to describe "Good" in terms of specific actions, we have to do it with an "outside view," and this excludes the vision of The One Self.

The definition "good" clearly varies with other definitions. The Christian teachings indicate that there is a God and a Devil. This amounts to two separate forces which are in no sense correlated. Either one is good—and therefore has entrance to the heavenly territory; or one is bad—and the devilish forces will take over. This would

make sense if it were not obvious that our entire universe could not exist were it not for the Oneness, which cannot be separated into good or bad. As previously mentioned, IT has no attributes. IT cannot be good or bad; and IT cannot be separated. It would be wrong to say that if the Highest were good, bad would descend from good, because the Real Self in us is One—neither good nor bad.

(*b*) The "good," by definition of the Third Fundamental, must be all that aids in the evolution of monads and souls—and therefore also each progressive awakening to the meaning of universal evolution. Whether a particular act or idea is "good" or not, thus depends on the situation at the time; does true evolution result? When people are trying to bring into play another part of the being than emotion, a part more closely connected with the inner man—*manas* and the reasoning ability—they must work through many different sorts of "good," see many new horizons which enlarge their conceptions of what it is that really makes a thing true or good. A child can accept set standards of good and evil or right and wrong and have them serve him quite well up to a certain point. Then he must begin to ponder the questions for himself and search his soul for the answers, without relying exclusively any more on someone else's experience. He must have "an inspiration of his own" and make of himself a man. This stands for a certain stage of development just as the "Age of Innocence," represented by some ancient cycles of civilization, was a stage of development.

There is, however, always present in the universe a body of knowledge which is ever valid. There are laws and fundamentals which lead to grasping the meaning of goodness and truth. So there are a great many aspects of life that can be thought of, or rather approached, only in abstract terms. Because man is still vulnerable to the confusions brought about by "passing through stages," and does not have his full being under control, he cannot understand or comprehend the full meaning of Life's cycles, laws, or truths at any one time. He must "be humble to attain to wisdom." It is "good" for him to realize that his conception of truth, goodness, or beauty must still be limited and relative. Yet, there is the truth that goodness is not limited, but is all-inclusive. There is the world of the eternal that "holds all," but, whenever there is manifestation, there is *another* world and another approach to understanding.

A sincere Theosophist will always try to contribute whatever services he can. One service is writing for the magazine THEOSOPHY. *A time may come, though, when a student is overwhelmed by a feeling of incapacity, and decides he must do more studying before he does any more writing. Is this avoiding his responsibility? Should he continue to write, even though he feels the results are pretty much worthless?*

(*a*) This feeling of incapacity overcomes most people at one time or another. It is a kind of state of confusion and, finally, after many battles within, one may manage to accomplish something like a psychological rebirth. There are, of course, different ways of going through these changes. The student can either stop writing for a while and "wait" until he feels enlightened enough to take it up once again, or he can continue writing and contribute the best he can—*in* his discouraged state of mind. If the student tries the first suggestion, he may find out, after a time of just studying, that there never comes a point where he can feel really capable of writing wisely and being satisfied with the results. Perhaps, too, after stopping writing, it will be much harder to start again.

It is not so much a question of avoiding his responsibility; for if he thinks he is not doing a good job, he already would not be fulfilling what he thinks to be his responsibility. On the other hand, he doesn't have to be concerned about the results as long as he does the best he knows. This leads again to the suggestion of keeping the writing up, in spite of that overwhelming feeling of incapacity. The very force of a desire to help may make it possible to do so. The contributions may not be used, but still the writing might very well provoke some deep thinking which would lead to greater understanding.

It is a good sign, though, if a student does get a feeling of awareness about his imperfections in understanding. That, too, is a sign on the path of philosophical growth, and if it influences what he is writing with humility and deeper thought, he may even help some other student through a similar "soul-search."

(*b*) The set-up for contributions to Youth Companions Ask—and Answer is arranged so that little or much may be contributed from any one person, since the answers are usually in the form of *a, b, c,* etc., and each can write on just one question, or just a part of one, as well as upon all of them—and it is also possible to simply put down one idea

or two on each in a few lines. Writing is indeed an individual matter and an undertaking that varies with each individual. For some it is a great effort, while for others it does not come so hard. But since in either case it encourages a discipline, the directing of the mind to a central point in order to say what it is that you are trying to convey, it would seem that writing is something that should be attempted pretty consistently, no matter what the amount produced. Just the fact that some effort has been made to organize words, thoughts and ideas and put them down in an intelligent manner, so that they describe correctly the meaning intended, is a big step toward bringing more of the latent powers of man into play—especially important for young people. Then, too, we do a lot of thinking every day about various things and happenings and it is good to try to pick out the essentials and see if they can be incorporated into helpful thinking for others.

The study of Theosophical writings is important and should not be neglected, but this does not mean that if one has not *thoroughly* studied the writings and knows just what H.P.B. or Mr. Judge or Mr. Crosbie has said on such a matter, he has nothing to say, for himself. He can always *think,* and, anyway, there must be effort put forth physically and mentally to encourage the study or reception of any study that might be undertaken in the teachings.

There are many ways of writing; those who are more intellectual will write in one way and bring out a certain dimension of the problem that one who writes more simply would not emphasize—and vice versa. But in either case the writer is obligated to screen out the basic points, and, like the painter, build a picture that is complete and whole, one that leads the eye where the painter wished it to go and see what he intended it to see. This initial beginning of writing can be accomplished in a few lines with just one point, so that one need not feel that because he realizes that there is much that he does not yet know, he has nothing to contribute to the magazine. In many other ways he does, and when he thinks this, a fresh approach to the questions is more likely to be forthcoming. To me, writing is an undertaking which helps the individual immensely if he is determined, by "keeping it up," not to avoid "responsibility." Perhaps the only way that writing will ever come a little easier, for those who find it so difficult, is through putting forth of effort constantly and determinedly, even though it be only a few sentences and just one idea. The pattern is then set and channels opened a little for further progress.

THE VERITY OF MYTH

THE study of the hidden meaning in every religious and profane legend, of whatsoever nation, large or small—but eminently the traditions of the East—occupied the greater portion of the life of H. P. Blavatsky. She felt convinced from such study that no mythological story, no traditional event in the folk-lore of a people has ever been, at any time, pure fiction; but that every one of such narratives has an actual, historical lining to it. The fables of mythology, she believed, were the means of conveying facts; they were neither forgeries nor fictions. "When the *false theologies* disappear, then true prehistoric realities will be found, contained especially in the mythology of the Aryans—the ancient Hindus and even the pre-Homeric Hellenes."

H. P. Blavatsky wrote that the origin and meaning of mythology have been missed altogether. Mythology was a primitive *mode of thinking.* It was founded on natural facts, and is still verifiable in phenomena. There is nothing insane, nothing irrational in it, when considered in the light of evolution, and when its mode of expression by sign language is thoroughly understood. Mythology is the repository of man's most ancient science, and what concerns us chiefly is this—when truly interpreted once more, it is destined to be the death of those false theologies *to which it has unwittingly given birth.* Judaism, earlier and later Gnosticism, Christianity, and even Christian Masonry have all been erected upon identical cosmical myths, symbols and allegories, whose full comprehension is possible only to those who have inherited the key from their inventors. To show how much these have been misinterpreted by the widely different, yet intimately related systems, in fitting them to their individual needs, is not only to confer a benefit upon the student but as well to do a long deferred and much needed act of justice to those earlier generations, whose genius has laid the whole human race under obligation.

Myth was the favorite and universal method of teaching in archaic times, and in the use of allegory the truth was left to be deduced. Those myths which have now reached us and are rejected as absurd fables are often the *fragments of old systems.* Yet no one can seriously study ancient philosophies, in whatever form portrayed, without perceiving

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NOTE.—Collated from standard Theosophical works.

that the striking similitude of conception between all—in their exoteric form very often, in their hidden spirit invariably—is the result of no mere coincidence but of a concurrent design. And that there was, during the youth of mankind, one language, one knowledge, one universal religion, when there were no churches, no creeds or sects, but when every man was a priest unto himself. And if it is shown that already in those ages which are shut out from our sight by the exuberant growth of tradition, human religious thought developed in uniform sympathy in every portion of the globe; then it becomes evident that, born under whatever latitude, in the cold North or the burning South, in the East or West, that thought was inspired by the same revelations, and man was nurtured under the protecting shadow of the same Tree of Knowledge.

If error has prevailed and superstition run riot these many centuries throughout Christendom, it is the misfortune of the common people, the reproach of science. Each age had its unbelieving Thomases. But have they ever succeeded in checking the progress of truth? No more than the ignorant bigots who sat in judgment over Galileo checked the progress of the earth's rotation. No "exposures" whatever are able to vitally affect the stability or instability of a belief which humanity inherited from the first races of men, those who—if we can believe in the evolution of the spiritual man as in that of the physical one—had the great truth from the lips of their ancestors, *the gods of their fathers,* "that were on the other side of the flood." The identity of the Bible with the legends of the Hindu sacred books and the cosmogonies of other nations, must be demonstrated at some future day. Fables of the mythopœic age will be found to have but allegorized the greatest truths —even of geology and anthropology. It is in these ridiculously expressed fables, too, that science will have to look for her "missing links." For all possess a common identity of primitive conceptions, which—fables and legends though they are termed now and however thickly overgrown with the husks of popular embellishment—contain nevertheless the kernel of scientific and historical facts, and are still truths.

In nearly every mythology, which after all is *ancient* history, giants as well as the first couple play an important part. It will always be a subject of regret that history, rejecting *a priori* the actual existence of giants, has preserved us so little of the records of antiquity concerning them. Compare only this verse of Genesis vi: "And it came to pass,

when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of god saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. . . . There were giants in the earth in those days," etc.—with the part of the Hindu cosmogony in the Vedas, which speaks of the descent of the Brahmans and of the first Brahman complaining of being *alone* among all his brethren without a wife. Notwithstanding that the Eternal advises him to devote his days solely to the study of the Sacred Knowledge (Vidya), the *first-born* of mankind insists. Provoked at such ingratitude, the Eternal gives Brahman a wife of the race of giants, from whom all the Brahmans maternally descend. The same is found in the Scandinavian cosmogonical fragment, in the *Edda,* which shows the first man, called Bur, "the father of Bor, who took for wife Besla, a daughter of the giant Boltharam of the race of the *primitive giants.*" The same groundwork underlies the Grecian fables about the Titans; and may be found in the legend of the Mexicans—the four successive races of the Popul-Vuh. It constitutes one of the many ends to be found in the entangled and seemingly inextricable skein of mankind, *viewed as a psychological phenomenon.*

In Cornwall and in ancient Britain the traditions of giants are excessively common, and they are said to have lived even down to the time of King Arthur. All this shows that giants lived to a later date amongst the Celtic than among the Teutonic peoples. It would be poor anthropology indeed that would restrict the traditions of giants to Greek and Bible mythologies. Slavonian countries, Russia especially, teem with legends about the *bogatery* (mighty giants) of old; and their folk-lore, most of which has served for the foundation of national histories, their oldest songs, and their most archaic traditions, speak of giants of old. Giants were real living men, whether twenty or twelve feet high. In the old Norse mythology the giants, Skrymir and his brethren, against whom the sons of the gods fought, were potent factors in the histories of deities and men. Even the Homeric heroes, who of course belonged to a far more recent period in the history of the races, appear to have wielded weapons of a size and weight beyond the strength of the strongest men of modern times. If we turn to the New World, we have traditions of a race of giants at Tarija on the eastern slope of the Andes and in Ecuador, who combated the gods and men. These old beliefs, which term certain localities *los compos de los gigantes,* "the fields of the giants," still persist in tradition.

We venture to say that the language of the Initiated few—as in the veiled writings of Plato—was far more plain, and their science-philosophy far more comprehensive and satisfying alike to the physical and spiritual wants of man, than the terminology and systems respectively elaborated by modern sages. The so-called myths, in order to be at least approximately dealt with in any degree of justice, have to be closely examined from all their aspects. There are seven Keys to these ancient truths about man and his world about him, each of which has to be used in its right place and never mixed with any of the others. In our day of dreary soul-killing materialism, happily now beginning its ebb-tide, the ancient priest-Initiates have become in the opinion of our learned generations the synonyms of clever impostors, kindling the fires of superstition in order to obtain an easier sway over the minds of men. "Realism, not myth," is the demand of the hour. It is an unfounded calumny, generated by skepticism and uncharitable thoughts. No one believed more in Gods—or, we may call them, the Spiritual and now invisible Powers, *the noumena of the phenomena*—than they did. If, initiated into the Mysteries of Nature, and just *because they knew,* they were forced to withhold their knowledge from the profane, who would have sorely abused it, such secrecy was undeniably less dangerous than the policy of their usurpers and successors. The former taught only that which they knew. The latter, teaching that which they did not know, have invented, as a secure haven for their ignorance, a jealous and cruel Deity, who forbids man to pry into his mysteries under the penalty of damnation. And well they may, for *his* mysteries can at best be only hinted at in polite ears, never described. "It is not the key of St. Peter, or the Church dogma, but the *narthex*—the wand of the candidate for initiation—that has to be wrenched from the grasp of the long silent Sphinx of the ages."

The one prevailing, most distinct idea found in all ancient teaching with reference to cosmic evolution and the first "creation" of our globe with all its products—is that the whole Kosmos has sprung from the DIVINE THOUGHT. This thought impregnates matter, which is co-eternal with the One Reality; and all that lives and breathes evolves from the emanations of the One immutable, eternal root. These successive emanations are the "gods" of all the myths. And in every folklore the idea of the (emanated) "Creator" was symbolized generally by the Dragon and the Serpent—the Dragon of Good and the Serpent of Evil. These represent the gods and the demons, on earth the right-

and the left-hand Magic. The great "Wars in Heaven" between the opposing forces found in the Puranas; the wars of the Titans in Hesiod and other classical writers; the "struggles" also in the Egyptian legend between Osiris and Typhon, and even those in the Scandinavian legends, all refer to the same subject. Northern mythology refers to it as the battle of the Flames, the sons of Muspel who fought on the field of Wigred. All these relate to Heaven and Earth, and have a double and often even a triple meaning, and esoteric application to things above as to things below. They relate severally to astronomical, theogonical, and human struggles; to the adjustment of orbs, and the supremacy among nations and tribes. There are few myths in any religious system worthy of the name but have, as said, an historical as well as a scientific foundation. The "Struggle for Existence" and the "Survival of the Fittest" reigned supreme from the moment that Kosmos manifested into being, and could hardly escape the observant eye of the ancient sages. Hence the incessant fights of Indra, the god of the Firmament, with the Asuras; the battles fought between stars and constellations, between Moon and planets—later on incarnated as kings and mortals. Hence also the War in Heaven of Michael and his Host against the Dragon (Jupiter and Venus-Lucifer), when a third of the stars of the rebellious host was hurled down into Space, and "its place was found no more in heaven."

Archaic astronomy and the ancient physical and mathematical sciences expressed views identical with those of modern science, and many of far more numerous import. A struggle for life and a survival of the fittest in the worlds above, as on our planet here below, are distinctly taught. In Hindu mythology the celebrated War in Heaven or the prototypal battles between the gods, refers to several events on various and different planes of being. One of the meanings of the allegory of Brihaspati (Jupiter) is given as follows: Brihaspati is the presiding genius or regent of the planet Jupiter, the "guru of the gods." In the allegory he is the wronged husband, and "represented the dead-letter form of worship." It is Tara his wife—the symbol of one who, though wedded to dogmatic worship, longs for true wisdom— who is shown as initiated into his mysteries by King *Soma,* the giver of that wisdom. Soma the (male) Moon, Paris-like, carries this new Helen of the Hindu sidereal Kingdom away from her husband, which causes a great strife and *war* in Swarga (heaven). The episode brings on a great battle between the gods and the Asuras; both sides finding allies

in the prototypes of those who later become the Titans of various nations and the Miltonian Michaels and "leaders and members of the celestial Hosts." Soma is thus made in the allegory *to carry her away.* The result of this is the birth of Buddha—esoteric Wisdom—(Mercury or Hermes in Greece and Egypt). The latter is represented as "so beautiful," that even the husband, though well aware that Budha is not the progeny of his dead-letter worship—claims the "new-born" as his Son, the fruit of ritualistic and meaningless forms. It is not hard to see *the same story in the modern exoteric religions.*

The imagination of the ancients proved as boundless as the visible manifestations of the Deity itself which afforded them the themes for their allegories. Two things must be born in mind with regard to those myths with which we are in closest affinity: (*a*) the ancients allegorized the most important as well as the most trifling causes of the celestial motions; the nature of every phenomenon was personified; and in the mythical biographies of the Olympic gods and goddesses, one well acquainted with the latest principles of physics and chemistry can find their causes, inter-agencies, and mutual relations embodied in the deportment and course of action of the fickle deities; (*b*) that before the time when the Olympian Jupiter (the Hindu Brihaspati) was anthropomorphized by the genius of Phidias into the Omnipotent God, the *Maximus,* the God of gods, and thus abandoned to the adoration of the multitudes—in the earliest and abstruse science of symbology he embodied in his person and attributes the whole of the cosmic forces. In the Orphic theology, the oldest of all, metaphysically speaking, he represented both the *potentia* and *actus*—the unrevealed *cause* and the Demiurge, or the active creator as an emanation from the invisible potency. "Zeus" (Jupiter), says an Orphic hymn, "is the first and the last, the head and the extremities. From him have proceeded all things. He is a man and an immortal nymph (male and female element); the soul of things; and the principle motor in fire. He is the sun and moon, the fountain of the ocean, the demiurgos of the universe; one power, one God, the mighty creator and governor of the cosmos. Everything, fire, water, earth, ether, night, the heavens; Metis, the primeval architecturess (the Sophia of the Gnostics and the Sephira of the Kabalists), the beautiful Eros, Cupid, all is included within the vast dimensions of his glorious body."

The metaphysical researches of those ancients never clashed with scientific truths. And their religions may be truly termed the psycho-

physiological creeds of the priests and scientists, who built them on the traditions of the infant-world—traditions as received by the unsophisticated minds of the primitive races—and on their own experimental knowledge, hoary with all the wisdom of the intervening ages. There is hardly a scientific law, whether pertaining to physical astronomy or physical geography that could not be easily pointed out in the ingenious combinations of their fables. "We have, for example, but to open the most common book on astrology, and compare the descriptions embraced in the *Fable of the Twelve Houses* with the most modern discoveries of science as to the nature of the planets and the elements in each star, to see that without any spectroscope the ancients were perfectly well acquainted with the same. There we can learn to a certain extent of the degree of solar heat, light, and nature of the planets by simply studying their symbolic representations in the Olympic gods, and the twelve signs of the Zodiac, to each of which in astrology is attributed a particular quality. . . ."

The stumbling-block of scientific research into the world of the myth arises from a want of the sagacity called for to penetrate its substructure. Because of this, legends, allegories, symbols, if they but belong to the Hindu, Chaldean, or Egyptian tradition are thrown into the same heap of fiction. Plato declares in the *Gorgias* and the *Phædo* that myths are the vehicles of great truths well worth the seeking. Voltaire, after forty years of comparing and combining the systems of Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras, and the Oriental, voices the conviction: "Chance is a word void of sense. The world is arranged according to mathematical laws." The doctrine of the Ages asserts the presence of a *logos* (spirit of Truth) within every mythos. This is the first key to be adopted and used.

The Wisdom-Religion explains simply enough the nature of its child, the Myth, and the difficulty encountered in comprehending it. For one unacquainted with the esoteric explanation of the doctrines of those ancients, the path is hard, the outlook difficult to determine. Yet from knowledge, not ignorance, sprang the myths. Only when they are pondered deeply enough will their concealed wisdom make its appearance.

THE TRAVELER

BECAUSE man is a thinking being, he has questions; questioning, he seeks answers. The most pressing and immediate questions concern this matter of living—of using a body. "Man" is conscious every moment of the day and night, so his questioning is continuous, and it is his questioning which selects the path he will follow.

One of the most familiar obstacles, one found all along the way, is the disillusionment that comes to the traveler as he sees things from a changing point of view. Ever and again a man realizes to a greater degree that the world is an illusion. Having been accustomed for many rounds of evolution to reach directly into things and enjoy a close contact with them, he has built in this way his kinship with the material world. But as he loses this close contact, having moved along on the path, he inevitably sees much of his world from a higher viewpoint, and sees it as illusion. He has gradually grown out of it, and therefore it seems empty. In whatever direction he turns, the familiar mocks him. All that was counted as substantial and real is no longer so. Surely, he reasons, this is a form of failure; he has no home in the world.

Growing *out* of the world as he travels on the path, though, the traveler can also see objectively the forms *he* has created and has been using. And from this point on he can respect these forms the more, can use them to their highest purpose, for he has ceased to identify himself with them. He has merely "died out" of one range of perception of the world, and now, free of attachment to it, can the more usefully work in it. This is but part of another death—he finds that his own personality is an illusion, empty *of itself*. But, then, a "new birth." No longer does the bright flame of desire sear his mind and torture his being; no longer do passion and thirst for action force him into paths he would not take. He has moved from them. So, free from attachment to the personality, he can the more usefully use it.

He watches; he lives on, freed from the bondage to matter in the world outside his sphere and within it, having overcome the stronger claims of his own lower nature. Then does he become truly a never-tiring traveler on the path.

THEOSOPHIC REFLECTIONS

MANY well-meaning if occasionally egotistical people, after reading a few books on Theosophy, feel they are adequately well-versed and well-armed to venture forth in search of converts. "Why not," they ask themselves, "embark on a holy crusade with the object of bringing all misguided religionists into the Theosophic fold, and so hasten the dawn of the millennium?" However, before embarking on such a mission, it might be well for enthusiastic crusaders to reflect on whether or not such converts—including themselves in such a state of mind—would be an asset to the movement—if indeed they might not be a palpable liability. Surely, instead of engaging in an unremitting drive for converts, it would be more advantageous for such people to expend their energies on interior development, since it is the manasic awareness indicating the dawn of spiritual consciousness which strengthens any movement of lasting value.

It should not be thought that because we have read a few theosophic pamphlets, attended many lectures, and joined a study group, we have the prerogative to disdain or condemn current religions, or try to wean adherents therefrom. Proselyting, H.P.B. wrote, should form no part of our activities. For after all, each of the major religions undeniably contains a grain of divine truth; indeed, a study of *The Secret Doctrine* reveals that each is an offshoot of the Wisdom Religion, and it may be that each ego in search for truth in this incarnation is attracted to that exoteric religion best suited by ritual and creed to his present aspirations.

The Theosophic student should be careful not to show contempt for religious beliefs, remembering that whereas Theosophy as we understand it at present embodies as much spiritual wisdom as we are able to assimilate at this stage of our evolutionary growth, the *final truths* will not be revealed to us until we have prepared and developed our inner faculties to receive and understand them. We should, therefore, view all exterior forms of religious belief with impartiality. Moreover, we should remember that only when the light from the eternal ego commences to filter through to the lower *manas* will the individual be attracted to the study of the occult. We cannot drive people into the theosophic fold and hope to strengthen the movement thereby; nor should we retard the spiritual progress of others by adopting a super-

cilious or patronizing attitude toward the religious views they hold. No, not until we have incontrovertible proof that such beliefs are deleterious to the physical or spiritual well-being of the individual should we seek to free him from his bondage; and, even then, the tact and wisdom needed for such a task would tax the most courageous amongst us.

After all, the majority of those attracted to the study of Theosophy are passing through the Hall of Probationary Learning, which demands clear vision and entails many sacrifices. Those of us who earnestly desire to advance along this Hall and develop our inner faculties for the common good, must first and foremost be cognizant of, and show allegiance to, the Higher Self; for unless we do, we shall be as ships without a rudder. Only when the doctrine of the Higher Self is allowed to take possession of the mind will we begin to understand the meaning of existence on this plane. It is not simply a question of admitting that we have a Higher Self—a spark from the Divine Flame; our actions should invariably denote this. After all, when we are studying Theosophy it is comparatively easy to get so immersed in the pursuance of analogies and correlations that the fundamentals are somehow overlooked, until we suddenly realize that progress is being hindered. Our aim should be to participate in the lofty work of influencing the spiritual and ethical growth of humanity; in other words, to raise humanity to a higher level of thought and feeling than is apparent at present by helping to awaken intuition in ourselves and others, at one and the same time. We should endeavor to discipline our thoughts, always an essential although difficult task, but one which, if accomplished, leads to regulation of conduct, freedom from bigotry, steadfastness in pursuing our chosen course and complete confidence in the Higher Self.

Few of us are aware of the fact that each has a "Master" eager and willing to guide and serve him, not only for his own but also for the common good, if he will but seek through meditation. If, when fear assails us and we feel utterly incapable of meeting the demands made upon either our mental or physical resources, we would seek the aid of the Master, our troubles would evaporate like snow in the warm sunshine. "Take his orders and let him work in thee," counsels *Light on the Path;* and wise beyond measure is the student who follows this advice, for then truly he will be working with the Master for the common good. It is no easy matter, of course, for the personal ego to take orders from anyone, least of all from one who has neither form nor substance,

hence the friction and frustration so prevalent in this age; for the *personal ego,* ignoring the Master, and abetted by proud intellect, feels quite competent to handle all controversial matters coming within its ken. Not until karmic forces have intervened and suffering has played its necessary role, will the personal ego seek the help of its "Master"—which is in truth its Real Self. "Then"—to quote again from *Light on the Path*—"the heart will bleed and the whole life of the man seem to be utterly dissolved." But from this ordeal, surely the most stupendous for the neophyte, an indissoluble line will have been forged with the Higher Self, and we suddenly find ourselves on the Path of Attainment, doing the work allotted to us by the Masters. For it must be remembered that only after we have surrendered our thoughts and actions to the control of the Higher Self will it be possible for us to contact the Masters of Wisdom.

If we desire to work with these great souls (and surely this should be the objective of theosophic study), we must first prepare ourselves by self-discipline to be subservient to the wishes of the Master within, because unless we do, we cannot hope to reach in meditation to that plane on which the Masters of Wisdom operate. Only those who experience the peace emanating from kinship with the Higher Self know how to live in a world beset by disturbing influences, and work harmoniously, aiding evolutionary forces.

How came the race into possession of hope, that mysterious sustainer of all effort, the most constant and enduring of our life's companions, our friend of friends? If history have any meaning, we are upon a voyage hardly yet begun. We do well, I submit, when we put our trust in "the masked wizard" behind the scene—when we look back, we know not why, with instinctive fascination upon all the historical movements, refusing to sacrifice any one of them, the ethereal radiance of Greece, the Majesty of Rome, all facets of the human spirit represented in the ancient cultures and civilisations, the accumulated wisdom, the capitalised experience of the generations that have gone before us. If they have made errors, they have amid their tribulations also worked wonders.

—W. MACNEILE DIXON

THE WAR IN HEAVEN

WAR on earth is, alas, but too familiar; but "war in heaven" has a strange and a puzzling sound. Yet, *The Secret Doctrine* and all ancient scriptures contain many references to wars and struggles in the supernal regions. A moment's serious reflection ought to convince us that if there is war on earth, then, applying the occult maxim, "as above so below," war's counterpart must exist in "heaven"—or on the psychic and spiritual planes. The war depicted in the *Bhagavad-Gita* is just such a struggle between contending forces within man, forces which have their origin and habitat on inner and invisible planes, and manifest as effects in the terrestrial sphere. In his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita,* William Q. Judge impresses students with this view at the very outset. He wrote:

> The scene of the battle is laid on the plain called "Kuru-Kshetra," a strip of land near Delhi, between the Indus, the Ganges, and the Himalayan mountains. Many European translators and commentators, being ignorant of the psychological system of the Hindus—which really underlies every word of the poem,—have regarded this plain and the battle as just these two things and no more. . . . No doubt such a conflict did take place, for man is continually imitating the higher spiritual planes; and a great sage could easily adopt a human event in order to erect a noble philosophical system upon such an allegorical foundation.

If war on earth is the inevitable end product of war in heaven, then, clearly, peace will first descend to earth on the day when the inner war shall end in final victory of Spirit over Matter, of Good over Evil, of Buddhi-Manas over the psychic and the physical.

It must be apparent that when we refer to "heaven" in this connection, we do not mean that state of post-mortem consciousness and its corresponding plane known as Devachan. Theosophy teaches that Devachan is not all there is of transcendent states of consciousness—that it is, in fact, but an illusionary and passing aspect of the higher spiritual Egoic plane, a dream life which simply reflects and expands the unselfish thoughts, deeds and aspirations of the erstwhile *personal* man. On page 100 of the *Key to Theosophy,* H.P.B. characterizes the Devachanic plane in these words: "It is then one of the lowest, and in its manvantaric manifestations *fractioned*-aspects of this Spirit-matter, which is the conscious *Ego* that creates its own paradise, a fool's paradise, it may be, still a state of Bliss."

The false ideas of heaven taught in Western theology as a place of eternal bliss, reserved especially for the votaries of some favored religion (each dogmatic sect claiming to be that favored one), has resulted in the loss of the knowledge of the meaning of "warfare" in heaven, and its corollary doctrine, the Fall of the Angels—stories found in one form or another in all scriptures, including the Bible.

The symbolic war in heaven really has to do with the mysteries of spiritual evolution, but in Christianity, the loss of the master-key of reincarnation obscures the whole purpose of evolution. Can the object of one, short earth-life be an eternity of heavenly bliss and rest? The true teaching is that periods of rest, short or long, are for the acquisition of strength and the assimilation of experience—all in *preparation* for other periods of activity. These, moreover, should be motivated, not by a desire for reward for oneself, but by a desire to serve, to teach, and to help *others.*

A correct insight into the meaning of the war in heaven requires an expanded meaning for such terms as "soul," "spirit," and that has been provided in Theosophical literature. In some passages in the Second Volume of *The Secret Doctrine,* H.P.B. gives to the term "spiritual" a connotation which is almost the opposite of what we usually associate with that term:

> The "eye of Siva" did not become entirely atrophied before the close of the Fourth Race. When spirituality and all the divine powers and attributes of the deva-man of the Third had been made the handmaidens of the newly-awakened physiological and psychic passions of the physical man, instead of the reverse, the eye lost its power. But such was the law of Evolution, and it was, in strict accuracy, no FALL. The sin was not in using those newly-developed powers, but in *misusing* them; in making of the tabernacle, designed to contain a god, the fane of every *spiritual* iniquity. And if we say "sin" it is merely that everyone should understand our meaning; as the term *Karma* would be the right one to use in this case; while the reader who would feel perplexed at the use of the term "spiritual" instead of "physical" iniquity, is reminded of the fact that there can be no physical iniquity. The body is simply the irresponsible organ, the tool of the *psychic,* if not of the "Spiritual man." While in the case of the Atlanteans, it was precisely the Spiritual being which sinned, the Spirit element being still the "Master" principle in man, in those days. Thus it is in those days that the heaviest Karma of the Fifth Race was generated by our Monads.

In the above passage, it is apparent that "spiritual" is used in the sense of *Manasic* responsibility. It connotes the power to choose between Good and Evil, regardless of the direction of the choice. A wicked, selfish choice is as much a *spiritual* action as a noble, sacrificial one, as free-will is the inherent appanage of Self-consciousness, or Spirit. Because of the paucity of metaphysical terms in the English tongue, the designation "spiritual" is generally used to connote unselfish and pure action. To make up for the lack of appropriate terms, Theosophy, when converting Sanscrit terms into English, makes use of qualifying words to express metaphysical distinctions, and often the manner of usage is evident from the context. For example, on page 176 of the *Key to Theosophy,* H.P.B. uses the designation "THE SPIRITUAL *divine* EGO," when referring to the merging *into one* of Manas and Buddhi. Such union presupposes a definite choice on the side of the "Good," and so the Ego, in addition to being *Manasic* is now "divine" —compassionate.

The Secret Doctrine also employs the term spirit to define what may be called "negative perfection." Questions like these are frequently asked: "If we are spirit and if spirit is perfect, then why do we have to descend into matter? Why do we have to strive all over again to gain that which we already had in the beginning? Why, if we are perfect, do we succumb to matter?" It is because spirit *per se* is negative perfection, while the end of evolution is *positive perfection.* The latter can only be acquired through a *gnosis* comprehending *both* Good *and* Evil, and such knowledge is attained by passing through the *human stage* of evolution. As *The Secret Doctrine* puts it:

> It has already been stated that, to become a Self-Conscious Spirit, the latter must pass through every cycle of being, culminating in its highest point on earth in Man. Spirit *per se* is an unconscious negative ABSTRACTION. Its purity is inherent, not acquired by merit; hence, as already shown, to become the highest Dhyan Chohan it is necessary for each Ego to attain to full self-consciousness as a human, *i.e.,* conscious Being, which is synthesized for us in Man (I, 192-3).
>
> Perfection, to be fully such, must be born out of imperfection, the *incorruptible* must grow out of the corruptible, having the latter as its vehicle and basis and contrast. Absolute light is absolute darkness, and *vice versa.* In fact, there is neither light nor darkness in the realms of truth. Good and Evil are twins, the progeny of Space and Time. Separate them, by cutting off one from the other, and they will both die. Neither exists *per se,* since each has to be generated

> and created out of the other, in order to come into being; both must be known and appreciated before becoming objects of perception, hence, in mortal mind, they must be divided (II, 95-96).
>
> The Doctrine teaches that, in order to become a divine, fully conscious god—aye, even the highest—the Spiritual primeval INTELLIGENCES must pass through the human stage. And when we say human, this does not apply merely to our terrestrial humanity, but to the mortals that inhabit any world, *i.e.,* to those Intelligences that have reached the appropriate equilibrium between matter and spirit, as *we* have now, since the middle point of the Fourth Root Race of the Fourth Round was passed. Each Entity must have won for itself the right of becoming divine, through self-experience (I, 106).
>
> In sober truth, as just shown, every "Spirit" so-called is either a *disembodied or a future man.* As from the highest Archangel (Dhyan Chohan) down to the last conscious "Builder" (the inferior class of spiritual Entities), all such are *men,* having lived aeons ago, in other Manvantaras, on this or other Spheres; so the inferior, semi-intelligent Elementals—are all *future* men. That fact alone—that a Spirit is endowed with intelligence—is proof to the Occultist that that Being must have been a *man,* and acquired his knowledge and intelligence throughout the human cycle (I, 277).

It is the struggle of every Pilgrim-Soul—and all Souls are that—through the human arc of the Cycle of Incarnation that gives rise to the "war in heaven." Such war is the unavoidable concomitant of the necessity for difficult decisions—the moral responsibility which constitutes being human.

The various allusions to the war in heaven must be viewed in the light of the threefold power of the Godhead—the power to create or build, the power to preserve, of the Ego—and the power to destroy or tear down, in order the better to rebuild. As this process of building and rebuilding never ceases, so "this 'war in heaven' is going on eternally," as H.P.B. stated on page 109 of the *Transactions.* The following are some of her further explanations as given in the *Transactions*:

> Differentiation is contrast, the equilibrium of contraries; and so long as this exists there will be "war" or fighting. There are, of course, different stages and aspects of this war; such for instance as the astronomical and physical. For everyone and everything that is born in a Manvantara, there is "war in heaven" and also on the earth. There is a perpetual struggle for adjustment, for everything tends to harmonize and equilibrate; in fact it must do so before it can assume any shape. The elements of which we are formed, the particles of our bodies, are in a continual war, one crowding out the other and changing with every moment.

UNIVERSAL DIVINE PERFECTIONS

I am, O Arjuna, the seed of all existing things, and there is not anything, whether animate or inanimate, which is without me.
—*Bhagavad-Gita*

NOWADAYS, when clouds of gloom envelop the earth and the eyes of men are all too often turned upon the dark shadows of despair, it is refreshing to recall the consoling words of Krishna. For if it be true that every phenomenon of life possesses something of the divine, then never for one moment is Krishna absent from the world, however lonely and estranged the struggling "Arjunas" may sometimes feel themselves to be. The great Impersonal Self is everywhere present, the sustaining power within every form and expression of life. The Divine Law of Harmony never ceases to operate, but following each and every fluctuation of thought-force, it molds events, adjusts effects to causes, and thus provides human beings with the means by which they may grow in wisdom and power. Even if one's path in life be filled with sorrow and suffering, the compassionate hand of Krishna (or the Law of Life) is there, a guide and protector over all. To learn to "see Krishna in all things" means to look for the highest, to seek the constructive aspect of things and events, and to try to detect the beneficence of the ever-active Divine Law.

* * *

Among luminous bodies, O Krishna, thou art the sun, and of floods thou art the ocean. Among computations thou art time itself; the lion among beasts, and the *Manas* among all the senses and organs. Thou art the beginning, the middle, and the end of all existing things, for thou dost declare these truths thyself.

My Divine manifestations, O harasser of thy foes, are without end, the many which I have mentioned are by way of example.

I behold thee, O God of gods, as gold among metals, and as the lotus among flowers. Among harmonious sounds, thou art the music of the spheres. Of cycles of time, thou art the present moment, the only period in which it is possible to institute new causation, thus benefiting all life. Mortals, doting on fond memories of the past, or on pleasant dreams of what they *intend* to do in the future, find thee not.

I feel thee closest, Krishna, in *moments of doing*. Of precious stones buried deep within the bosom of earth, thou art the diamond; and of grains, wheat. Of schools of learning thou art life here in a body. Under thy tutelage, O Krishna, and the discipline of the Law, the mysteries of the universe may be unveiled. Of the assemblage of human beings upon earth, some I see are ignorant of the purpose of incarnation; some attempt to escape thy schooling; while others, despising the disciplines of duty and responsibility, seek instruction only through books. But the hosts of the Adepts and all the great saints and sages hail thy mode of instruction, declaring life here in a body to be the most excellent of academies.

Of symbols, O thou of infinite form, thou art Space—omnipresent, boundless and immutable—and of graceful figures, the sphere. Among delights, thou art worship of the SELF; and of services to mankind, labor in thy Cause. Of human relationships, I esteem thee friend, O Krishna, the one single kindred upon earth free of the human emotional element. Through companionship of friends, the bond of brotherhood grows strong, and the pilgrimage through life blossoms cheer.

Of liquids, O Krishna, thou art water, purest of the pure; and of virtues, patience. Among achievements thou art control over self, resulting ever in a humble, unwavering continuance in the practice of universal brotherhood. Even in punishment, O God of gods, I find thee triumphant in the sting of conscience.

Among philosophies, I behold thee Theosophia, the wisdom of the Gods. Thou art the power of imagination in all the arts; and of talents, genius itself. Wherever men aspire, O Krishna, thou art Arjuna, myself. With thee as charioteer, O God of gods, victory is assured. May I behold thy presence in the darkening clouds of battle!

To the human mind it seems that both space and time must be either finite or infinite. Yet it is quite impossible for that same mind to see how they can be either. We cannot possibly imagine a time before time existed or a time when it shall have ceased to be. Neither can we imagine either an infinite past or an infinite future. We cannot conceive a space beyond which there is nothing—not even more emptiness. But neither can we conceive the boundless.

—JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

ON THE LOOKOUT

New Interest in Ancient Medicine

Readers may recall articles on *Tridosha,* appearing in Theosophy, Vols. 40 and 41. Tridosha is a branch of *Ayurveda,* which (according to the *Journal* of the American Medical Association, Dec. 3, 1955) is "a system of medicine supposed to have dated from the 27th century B.C. and extended to about the 10th century A.D." *JAMA* reports:

> In an editorial in the August issue of the *Antiseptic,* Dr. Krishna Rau stated that public opinion has been strongly rising in favor of *Ayurveda.* . . . Several eminent physicians, after having practiced modern medicine, have studied *Ayurveda* with great interest and enthusiasm. . . . One of the drugs that has created world-wide interest, Rauwolfia serpentina, comes from this indigenous system of medicine.

Ayurveda Rejuvenescent?

> Research institutions have been established along modern scientific lines to study *Ayurveda* in relation to modern western medicine. . . . Because it is based to a great extent on botanical knowledge and the availability of a wide range of medicinal plants, it has the advantages of being cheap and of using easily available drugs. The protagonists have brought out several arguments in its favour including the sense of patriotism, and antagonists, backed by physicians trained in modern medicine, have considered it ancient and useless. The editorial has tried to show that the truth lies somewhere between the two points of view. If the *Ayurvedic* system is to come into its own again, there must be an integration of it with all that is best in any other system of medicine. This can only be done if *Ayurvedic institutions* develop into active centers of objective research.

This—in India?

In strange contrast to the foregoing recognition of "Indian mysticism in medicine" comes notification (*JAMA,* Dec. 24, 1955) that the Indian Government "has accepted the recommendations of the Pharmaceutical Enquiry Committee for the expansion of the pharmaceutical industry in India. . . . The committee has recommended that slaughterhouses along modern lines, equipped to collect and store the glands and organs required by the pharmaceutical industry, should be provided in all cities and large towns."

PERCEPTION OF WHOLENESS

It will, we think, be the world's loss if the ancient dignity of Indian Pantheism retreats before the "black magic" of scientific disregard of the sanctity of animal life. Edmond Taylor (*Richer by Asia*) is a man worth listening to on this point. He speaks of "the greater pantheist wonder of wholeness perceived," and continues:

> Psychological adjustment to destiny depends upon the feelings that we have about our biological neighbors, the other animals, and the whole scheme of nature. Perhaps, as the Hindus and Buddhists believe, man diminishes himself when he takes the lives of other creatures. Certainly he impoverishes himself by being unaware of them. I think that the reason why the jungle was always a magical place for me, an animist grove and at times a pantheist temple, was because I discovered in it, more vividly than I had in the Western countryside, the biological background of the drama of human life, which our present urban culture tends to push out of consciousness.

CITADEL OF ORTHODOXY ASSAULTED

Time for Jan. 2, after summarizing its earlier account of the trial for heresy of three Wisconsin pastors by the Northwest Synod of the United Lutheran Church in America, quotes "a fierce defense of the accused heretics" from the current *Christianity and Crisis*. The author of the defense, Rev. Clarence Kilde, of Oconomowoc, Wis., writes:

> American Protestantism is never very profound in its heresy charges. [The charges] fix on the virgin birth. Freudians may have their own explanation of this. But obviously, what is more popular than the Christmas story? Non-theological Americans in a secular age can be counted on to know at least the Christmas story. . . .
>
> Now, that the virgin birth is neither a great historical doctrine nor by itself profound theology ought to be quite evident in reviewing a few basic observations. Chronologically the oldest gospel, that of Mark, does not mention the idea. The oldest manuscript of the Gospel according to St. Matthew concludes the genealogical table thus, "And Joseph begat Jesus." (According to St. Matthew, King James version: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.")

CLASSIC DOCTRINE OF VIRGIN BIRTH

> The two greatest interpreters of Jesus in the New Testament are the author of the Fourth Gospel, and he who wrote more than one-half of the New Testament, Paul the Apostle. To both we owe the

profound, classic doctrine of the Incarnation, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (*John* 1:14); and again, "But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his son, born of woman" (*Galatians* 4:4). The Incarnation, yes, but for these two writers, responsible for giving us most of the New Testament, the virgin birth was not dignified enough to mention. For virgin birth was a contemporary, popular thought pattern explaining the unusual greatness of such men as Pythagoras, Plato, Augustus Caesar.

A Question of Values

According to *Time,* Mr. Kilde suspects that the real crime of the three ministers was that they were not sufficiently concerned with what the Church considered to be truly *important* issues: "After all, a sister synod of the Midwest, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, has reported establishing a new parish every 18 days. . . . At denominational headquarters it is statistics that are important, not spiritual sincerity or theological integrity." Mr. Kilde then observes:

> Lutheranism in the Midwest is a diaspora culture. This is to say theology stopped developing with the immigrant fathers of the church in the Mississippi Valley, whereas Lutheranism in Europe kept theologically up to date.
>
> But the mere fact of the heretics' existence may be taken as a harbinger of better times to come. Whatever the weather otherwise, it is springtime in Midwestern Lutheranism. The ice is beginning to break; the long, cold winter of dark dogmatism . . . is beginning to wane.

"Who knows the possibilities of the future? An era of disenchantment and rebuilding will soon begin—nay, has already begun. The cycle has almost run its course; a new one is about to begin, . . . A few centuries more, and there will linger no sectarian beliefs in either of the great religions of humanity." (H.P.B.)

Britain Takes a Step Forward

"In an historic decision, Britain's House of Commons last night voted to end the death penalty," says a report from London (Los Angeles *Examiner,* Feb. 17). The government had expected to win retention by a slight margin, but the almost solid Labor opposition was increased by enough Conservatives and Liberals to swing the vote for abolition of capital punishment. The report continues:

> The reaction of the British public appeared to be mainly favorable today. . . .

> The measure is so worded the government can comply with its terms by abolishing the gallows—the only method of capital punishment in this island kingdom—for a trial period to allow reconsideration.
>
> The vote means the government is directed by the House to introduce legislation sweeping capital punishment from the books, either forever or for some specified period.
>
> It is understood no capital punishment will be carried out before this legislation is introduced. Presumably the few murderers now under sentence will have their sentences commuted to life imprisonment.

INTERIM EFFORT

Somewhat in contrast to the way the death-penalty issue, whenever raised, seems to be quickly dropped by newspapers in the United States, the British press has kept discussion alive by printing editorials and letters from correspondents since an initial defeat of a similar bill in February, 1955. Notable in this respect has been the Manchester *Guardian's* (Nov. 10) summary of arguments for abolition, indicating the caliber of British thinking and writing responsible for the decision of the Commons. In view of the reputation of this weekly, and the probability that capital punishment will continue to be an issue in the United States as well as in England, we reprint the entire editorial, partly as recommendation of a pamphlet by Mr. Victor Gollancz, a determined pacifist:

FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

> The opponents of capital punishment are not allowing themselves to be discouraged by the Commons adverse vote in February. The National Campaign for the Abolition of Capital Punishment, the launching of which was announced by Mr. Victor Gollancz in August, is holding a great public meeting to-day at the Central Hall, Westminster—or rather, public meetings, for it seems likely that a number of overflows will be needed. Mr. Gollancz himself will take the chair for a dozen speakers, any one of whom could fairly be expected to sustain a meeting by himself. With this gathering in mind, Mr. Gollancz has written a pamphlet, "Capital Punishment—the Heart of the Matter." This is a passionate statement of the moral case against the death penalty, set out with all the author's familiar cogency and humanity. This is the right, the essential, base for the campaign.

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

> There has been much inclusive argument about the effectiveness of capital punishment as a deterrent to murder; and this may have given

> some people the idea that the question is primarily an administrative one, that the pros and cons are more or less in balance, and that it would therefore be wrong, as the Home Secretary has said, to make any change unless there is a tremendous popular demand for it. But that is not the heart of the matter. The heart is that the judicial taking of life is something in itself ethically wrong, and that the scales of practice can be tipped in its favour only by a tremendous weight of evidence that it is socially necessary for the avoidance of worse wrongs. That evidence does not exist. The real onus lies on the defenders of capital punishment to produce it, and they cannot. The first objective of the campaign should be, and the effect of Mr. Gollancz's pamphlet is, to show just where the onus lies.

Fervor of Altruism

Mr. Gollancz was not the only Englishman of note to supply persistent backing to the abolition movement. Arthur Koestler, presently residing in England, also let it be known that he was writing a book presenting a case for abolition. England's foremost playwright, J. B. Priestley, was also a leader in the campaign, as was Augustus John, Sir Compton Mackenzie, Henry Moore, Dame Edith Sitwell, Christopher Fry and many others prominent in the arts and in academic, religious, and political life. As a New York *Times* writer remarked on Jan. 8, "these campaigners warm up to their work with the fervor that Wilberforce and his followers once showed in their onslaughts against the Slave Trade. They feel confident that their task will be shorter than his life's work, which remained uncompleted at his death."

An Insensitive America?

In disappointing contrast to the foregoing, a Los Angeles *Times* editorial (Feb. 19) indicates that the conservative press of the United States will support the old opinion that capital punishment is "necessary." Suggesting that the present British move in the House of Commons is some sort of over-compensation for "900 years of the gallows," the *Times* writer comments:

> The British have had capital punishment on their consciences for a long time. The agitation against it, some of it of considerable literary merit as well as force, has been going on for more than a century.
>
> Nobody can prove such a thing, but it seems quite likely that many a Briton who opposes the hangings of a few murderers annually thinks less of the present than he does of the past. He is making an amend for a barbarous history.

It is a little difficult to see how one gallows can be worse than another, or why the electric chair and gas chamber are more progressive and humane than the noose. We should rather attribute Britain's "tenderer conscience" to the same general perspective which has enabled conscientious objectors and other pacifists to play a respected role in British public affairs.

Those presently under sentence of death in England, it is to be hoped, will receive commutation to life sentences; one may wish that those endeavoring to achieve abolition in the various State Legislatures of the United States will redouble their efforts, encouraged by this notable success of Britain's century-old effort.

HUMAN NATURE DOES CHANGE!

"One of the most widely held opinions in virtually all schools of psychology and common in the public mind received a jolt here today," writes Lawrence E. Davies from San Francisco in a special report to the New York *Times* (Sept. 4, 1955). The idea commonly accepted is that adults do not change in personality—the thought inherent in the remark: "Good old Joe is the same as he was twenty years ago. He can never be any different." The attack against the "no change" theory occurred in an address before the American Psychological Association by its retiring president, Dr. E. Lowell Kelly of the University of Michigan. Dr. Kelly offered evidence based on a retest of several hundred adults twenty years after their first tests. The changes were relatively slow and undramatic but some were highly surprising and significant.

YOU'RE NOT THE PERSON YOU WERE A YEAR AGO

In interesting counterpoint, Dr. Paul C. Aebersold, director of the isotopes division of the Atomic Energy Commission, reported that research with nuclear aids showed that 87 per cent of the basic material in the human *body* is replaced yearly. As stated in the New York *Times,* Sept. 29:

> Studies made with isotopes—variable forms of the atom—had disproved the old theory that the body takes in food, air and water mainly as fuel to provide energy and only in small part "for replacement of engine wear."
>
> Writing in the annual report of the Smithsonian Institution, Dr. Aebersold said: "Tracer studies show that the atomic turnover in our bodies is quite rapid and quite complete. . . . In a year approximately

> 98 per cent of the atoms in us now will be replaced by other atoms that we take in our air, food and drink."

If it is true that in 53 weeks there is a total change in the make-up of the body, then the question for psychology should perhaps be: Why does the personality *remain the same* for such a long period of time?

How can we keep our identity over an entire lifetime of possessing many, many new bodies? If we were only our bodies, we really should expect to be "somebody else" each year. Also, how can we recall incidents forgotten for many years, then suddenly be awakened, let us say, by a chance meeting with an old friend? Experiments in hypnosis confirm that the so-called "subconscious mind" retains the smallest detail of an individual's life. Is there perhaps evidence here suggesting the existence of an immortal ego, changeless in these changing forms, and the permanent recorder of all experience?

Reincarnation—an "Old Error"

An item in the *Mirror-News* (Los Angeles) for March 26—released for general publication by the National Catholic News Service—sustains Lookout's previous prediction that current interest in reincarnation, occasioned by the much-publicized Bridey Murphy case, would arouse the same determined opposition by Church authorities as when the doctrine of re-birth was originally anathematized. In an authorized interview, Father Pascal P. Parente, head of the Catholic University, Washington, D.C., commented:

> The doctrine of reincarnation, known as metempsychosis, is one of the oldest errors, both in religion and philosophy. We find it in Buddha's as well as in Brahma's conceptions. It appears later in Greece and Egypt. It is mentioned by Pythagoras and in Plato's Dialogues.
>
> The idea of "reincarnation" is directly opposed to Scripture, specifically to St. Paul's statement in Hebrews, 9, 28: "It is appointed unto man to die once, but after this comes the judgment . . ."

Gospel "Perversion"!

> Furthermore, the idea is psychologically absurd, because it ignores human personality, which is based substantially on union of the soul with the body. Morally, it perverts the notion of expiation, which demands knowledge of one's guilt. It is a fantastic doctrine, denying Divine Providence and admitting a cruel fate and destiny for all.

The Bridey Murphy tale, asserts Father Parente, "serves Satan well by specifically denying the existence of Purgatory," and he points out

that all kinds of dreams can be produced when the subject is in a deep hypnotic sleep. In conclusion, Father Parente resorts to typical Catholic technique as he quotes St. Paul's "warning" to the Galatians (1:8): "There are some who . . . wish to pervert the Gospel of Christ. And even if we or an angel from Heaven should preach a Gospel to you other than that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema."

A PARAPSYCHOLOGIST COMMENTS

Fortunately however, such pronouncements are rendered practically innocuous—save for those to whom they are directed—by the equally wide publicity given to fair and openminded discussion. *American Weekly,* for example, chose Dr. J. B. Rhine, one of our foremost parapsychologists, to discuss the Bridey Murphy case "from the scientific viewpoint." In the April 8 issue Dr. Rhine begins, under the title "Did *you* live before?":

> If you believe, as most people do, that man has a spirit and that it can survive bodily death, perhaps you sometime have wondered about the possibility of reincarnation; the possibility that a disembodied spirit, by taking possession of the body of a newborn infant, returns to live a second, or even a third and fourth life on this earth.
>
> Millions of people, most of them in Asia, devoutly accept the idea of such rebirth as a part of their religion. In our own country some individuals and cults believe in reincarnation, but most faiths do not claim its existence.

REINCARNATION NOT THE ONLY EXPLANATION

We may note with some dismay that the rationale of reincarnation suggested by Dr. Rhine is spiritualistic in tone, yet the reader will remark his next warning statement that "thousands of men and women seeking a new hope of survival go on an emotional spree." To help stem the tide of emotionalism, Dr. Rhine discusses many of the questions that have been raised in connection with this case:

> For a careful study of so important a matter as reincarnation, it would be necessary to know what went on in the conversations that took place with the girl awake, between sessions, as well as when hypnotized.
>
> It is not safe to assume that there is no leakage of knowledge from one to another of these states. What were her contacts? . . . It is also possible that this young woman could have gained her knowledge through telepathy or clairvoyance, two forms of what we call extrasensory perception (ESP). Science has shown by careful experiment

that ESP, or the acquisition of knowledge beyond the reach of the senses, is a normal capacity of human beings.

These powers may be increased under hypnosis, and through telepathy Ruth could have received information from the mind of someone who knew of experiences that now have been attributed to Bridey Murphy. Or through clairvoyance—which is the ability to see objects without use of our normal senses—she could have had access to all the sources of information in which Mr. Bernstein later checked names and dates in Bridey's life.

Possibilities of Suggestion

We know enough about hypnosis to expect that a good subject, faced with her hypnotist's suggestion that she would find herself in some other scene at some other time, would do her best to comply. She would be likely to choose a setting for her dramatic role which she already knew, although that knowledge might be stored away in unconscious memories. Then if she needed to round out the drama she could exercise her extra-sensory abilities.

It also is possible that Morey Bernstein gave unwitting aid in the questions he asked while "fishing" for answers that would carry on the story. And it would be completely natural for these amateurs in the field of psychic research to be convinced that they had discovered a true case of reincarnation.

If we are to consider the question seriously, and try to find some proof of reincarnation, leading a person back through hypnotic regression—as was done in this case—is the wrong road to take.

Science will first have to prove that there is a spirit personality which can exist apart from its body.

Caution Needed

Dr. Rhine goes on to relate a few of the "several hundred instances which seem to indicate that the teller of the tale had had contact with a loved one who has passed on," ending with the caution:

For the careful thinker I need not warn against the tendency to take these experiences in themselves as final and adequate evidence of anything. That is not the fair and proper way to treat them. . . . But just as one must not take them as proof, so one cannot and should not dismiss them all as worthless supersition or mere coincidence. It is enough at this stage to know that in these experiences something of the unrecognized nature of man probably is being revealed.

Let us make our explorations as carefully as possible and go as cautiously into interpretations and applications as the gravity of the issues deserve.

A POPULAR SUBJECT

As might be expected, the publicizing of the Bridey Murphy case has occasioned a heightened interest in hypnotism. It is gratifying, however, to see that a good proportion of press comment stresses the danger and questions the value of hypnosis. One columnist (Chicago *Tribune,* Jan. 1-4) proposes that "almost every question about hypnotism has two answers, yes or no," and concludes:

> Until a few years ago it was used almost exclusively by entertainers and quacks. Since the war it has gained a certain aura of respectability because of the interest and experiments of a few reputable enthusiasts in the medical and dental professions.
>
> However, it is still generally regarded with reserve or caution by most colleges, universities, medical and dental schools, and reputable practitioners. One of its big drawbacks is that in all the voluminous literature amassed on the subject, no two "authorities" agree on anything.

SOME AREAS OF AGREEMENT

Most doctors, however, will probably agree with Dr. James A. Brussel, of Willard, N.Y., who states in *Today's Health* that "hypnotism can be downright dangerous when used by an irresponsible person." Dr. Brussel particularizes the dangers (Los Angeles *Mirror-News* Feb. 3):

> 1. Where hypnotism removes warning pain or other symptoms, illnesses even as serious as cancer can be obscured and thus neglected.
>
> 2. Where hypnotism tampers with emotional symptoms and not their causes, a personality may be in danger.
>
> 3. Where hypnotism creates delusions, such as "mastery of the mind," habits of thought as harmful as drug addiction may be formed.

The Pasadena *Independent* (Feb. 4) quotes Dr. Brussel further:

> The quack can do irreparable harm by his ability to produce hypnotic effects which he doesn't understand and doesn't know how to use.
>
> By virtue of the sudden, immediate and seemingly successful results achieved through hypnosis, the quack flourishes and creates damage that is at times appalling.

While Theosophists are not likely to agree with the tacit assumption that hypnosis in the hands of "experts" is *not* dangerous, warnings of this sort, if sufficiently publicized, may help keep the practice of hypnotism from becoming a popular fad.